



WIRELESS EBT PROJECT

January 2016 Newsletter



From the Editor – Tracy Penick

Month	EBT Transactions	Debit/Credit Transactions	Total Transactions	EBT Sales	Debit/Credit Sales	Total Sales
January	31	299	330	\$1,340.73	\$14,917.92	\$16,258.65
February	30	276	306	\$803.02	\$18,751.58	\$19,554.60
March	50	626	676	\$988.73	\$18,657.83	\$19,646.56
April	55	718	773	\$1,488.58	\$26,719.09	\$28,207.67
May	324	5571	5895	\$5,863.20	\$193,180.02	\$199,043.22
June	442	6027	6469	\$5,139.01	\$151,855.82	\$156,994.83
July	821	5239	6060	\$8,337.80	\$94,212.18	\$102,549.98
August	993	5969	6962	\$10,880.99	\$111,654.60	\$122,535.59
September	786	7902	8688	\$9,818.27	\$180,869.01	\$190,687.28
October	603	13727	14330	\$8,211.04	\$345,215.95	\$353,426.99
November	66	2187	2253	\$2,062.97	\$68,305.32	\$70,368.29
December	49	2139	2188	\$976.15	\$84,469.68	\$85,445.83
Total for Year	4,250	50,680	54,930	\$55,910.49	\$1,308,809.00	\$1,364,719.49

Total sales for the project topped out at \$1,364,719.49 which is the highest amount of sales in the history of the Wireless EBT Project. Unfortunately, EBT sales were down which I am hearing is a problem that other states are encountering.

It was a year for the record books as we switched the entire project over to a new processor and filled out the Farmers Market Coalition (FMC) grant. 90 of our farmers were awarded the FMC grant and with this grant received all new equipment and three years of core fees. With change, comes issues which we experienced along the way. I appreciate all of you being patient and willing to go down a foreign path for the betterment of the project. I so enjoy working with all of you and count it a blessing. Thanks to all of you for a great 2015!

December 2015 Facts:

Total sales for December this year were lower than December 2014 (\$85,445.83 compared to \$93,360.01). The number of EBT transactions were lower in 2015 than in 2014 (49 compared to 88). For December 2015, there were a total of 2,188 wireless transactions compared to 2,519 in 2014.

In December 2015, there were 179,582 Food Assistance/EBT families in Iowa. \$42,568,955 in benefits were issued in December to these families.

Here are other interesting facts regarding December sales:

There were 47 farmers who were active in December and 13 of those had EBT sales. The farmers with the highest EBT transactions were:

- ❖ DeMoss Pumpkin Farm – Ames
- ❖ Grossman Meats - Preston
- ❖ Hollow Maple Farm - Bennett
- ❖ Oak Hill Acres – Atalissa
- ❖ Sawyer Beef - Princeton

Monthly fees

Just a reminder that if your wireless machine was left active during the winter months, the monthly fees will continue to be debited from your bank account around the 2nd of every month. It is important that you keep enough money in your account so that you are not charged non-sufficient fees by Ignite Payments and possibly your bank.

Time to Recruit New Farmers!

It is that time of year where we need to begin recruiting new farmers for the Wireless EBT Project. Do you know of any farmers in your farmers market that would benefit by being a part of the Wireless EBT Project? If so, please let me know so I can reach out to them.

2016 Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Growers Annual Conference

The annual Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference will be held on January 28 and 29 at the FFA Enrichment Center on the DMACC Campus in Ankeny.

I will be hosting a booth to promote the Wireless EBT Project and hopefully gain some new farmers for the project. Please be sure to stop by and say hi if you are planning on attending this conference!

18th Annual Iowa Farmers Market Association Workshop

The 18th Annual Iowa Farmers Market Association Workshop will be held on Saturday, February 6th from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. This year the workshop will be held at Polk County, Westside Community Center located at 134 6th Street, Valley Junction.

Sessions will include Food safety regulations and licensing; Scales, unit of sale and packaging; Inspections, sales and labeling of meat & poultry; Retail sales tax; Farmers market nutrition program; Specialty crop block grant program; USDA marketing; and panel discussions.

If you are interesting in attending this workshop, information can be found at the below link.

<http://www.iafarmersmarkets.org/2016-workshop.html>

Update information with the USDA

Just a reminder that it is extremely important to report any changes to the USDA. The USDA is who authorized you to accept EBT. If you have a name change or an address change it needs to be reported so that your authorization is up to date. If you have a change, please call 312-353-6609 to report the change.

Changes to your contact information?

It is very important that DHS has your current e-mail addresses and your correct phone numbers. I send out a lot of important information and if DHS does not have your current information you could be missing out on important information. Please make sure that if you change your e-mail address or you drop or pick up a new phone number that you share that information with me.

Paper for your wireless machine

Just a reminder that DHS supplies the paper rolls for your wireless machines. It is imperative that you use thermal paper or it could ruin your machine. Please do not use any other type of paper in your wireless machine other than the paper that DHS supplies. If you are running low on paper, please give me a call.

Reminders:

1. Remember that you cannot ring up a sale for another vendor. You could lose your Food Stamp certification and be terminated from the Wireless Project.
2. Since you are paying for the commercial transaction fees, be sure to keep track of what you are paying so you can use those expenses as a tax deduction.
3. You cannot set a minimum purchase amount. If an EBT household wishes to purchase \$.50 in onions, you do need to process the transaction. Same for any debit or credit transaction.
4. Hot foods and hot drinks (cocoa, coffee, and tea) cannot be purchased with SNAP EBT benefits.
5. If you experience issues with your FD 410 machine, please call Technical Support at 1-877-274-7915. You will need to supply your Merchant Identification number. If you can't get the problem solved, please call Tracy.
6. Call Tracy if you need any supplies such as paper rolls, power cords, or battery.
7. Charge your batteries before market. You should always have a charged battery, ready to go for market. If a battery is not holding a charge, contact Tracy for a replacement.

Help Desk

We are here to help you!

When you have questions about:

- Participating in the Wireless project or reimbursement questions? Call Tracy Penick at 515-281-4935.
- What you can sell to EBT customers, or being authorized to accept EBT? Call USDA/FNS at 877-823-4369.
- Food Assistance eligibility? Call Kari Lind at 515-281-7000.
- Supplies – call Tracy Penick at (515) 281-4935.